

Ophthisis Pulmonalis

This famous Art. Essay baffled the
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dent Ophthisis Pulmonalis a medium

Respectfully Submitted to the Faculty
of the Homoeopathic Medical College
of Pennsylvania made of at least some
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efficiently disturbed

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John C. Hitchens

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on a February 1. 1858. at so and
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Pthisis Pulmonalis

This form of disease has long baffled the skill of men of the highest medical reputation, and indeed so little impression, owing perhaps to an imperfect knowledge of the remedial action of drugs, have all the medicines which are usually employed had upon it, in its advanced stages of development as to cause the conviction to fasten deeply and firmly upon the minds of at least some eminent Physicians, that when vital organs, and especially the lungs were the seat of it, a cure was utterly impossible. Even now, with all the light which homœopathy has thrown around this unnecessarily fatal disease—with all the proofs, which it has so amply furnished of its power if not to cure, to arrest for a time its further progress, these

are many truly eminent Practitioners of our own School, who contend that the disease is incurable.

Examples, we admit are too numerous. But fortunately for suffering humanity, by the genius of Hahnemann, the medical mind, like other mind, has felt the genial influence of the spirit of honest inquiry, which is so characteristic of the action of intellect during the present century: and bursting away its shackles, has darted forward on its path of independent and fearless investigation. Subjecting the opinions of Antiquity to the test of reason, which if found to be in accordance with that reason, have been retained and still more ardently venerated, while those ^{the value of which} has only been derived from the fact of their antiquity, have been abandoned and discarded with as little regret, as the harsh

and various treatment formerly made use of for the cure of Tubercular Consumption. The science of medicine has presented to the investigation of this awakened medical mind no more important or interesting subject than that which has reference to tubercular disease, nor is this strange, when we consider that so much suffering and distress result as a consequence of the ravages of this disorder, and how life is, if protracted, rendered (especially by Allopathic treatment) a scene of weariness, pain and distress, through the influence of this prolific source of suffering. The object perhaps we should say formerly of many skilful Physicians, who were doubtless as deeply affected by the suffering of their patient, as ^{by} the inexorable character of the disease, seems to have been merely to palliate and smooth the passage of the diseased one.

to the grave, without expecting to effect a cure. It has ^{however} been suggested, though very carefully, not really as an opinion, but as a thought, worthy at least of consideration, that while disease is the result of some specific principle or miasm, which affects the organism in a manner peculiar to itself, that there is a corresponding fixed, morific principle, a gent or germ, somewhere in nature designed by a benevolent Creator for its cure. If this be true, and we admit that it is at least plausible, we have in futuro the grand and imposing triumph of Homoeopathy rendered entirely complete, over not only Tubercular Consumption, but every other ^{stigma} system of the healing art.

The importance of this opinion evidently depends greatly upon the views which we form of "similia". It is believed by some medical writers, that in Medicine there are analogies, but no identities.

Here it may be assumed lies, we think from well ascertained facts, which have been determined by actual experiment, the view of a very large number of homoeopathic physicians. If there is any one fact more certain and reliable than any other, it is the fact, that drugs act as curative agents in disease, only so far as they are capable of producing the same state or condition. It is true, that there are a variety of opinions respecting the homoeopathicity of drugs. Teste remarks with regard to this self-evident proposition, that natural maladies, as well as drug diseases, have their primary and their secondary symptoms, and that it is not sufficient that a drug in order to be really homoeopathic to a given disease, should be capable of producing symptoms similar to those of the natural malady, but that the alternate effects of the drug and those

of the disease must develop themselves in the same order." The law of "Similia Similibus Curantur" implies, not merely a relation of similarity, but a relation of identity between the action of the medicinal agent and that of the morbid principle of disease. Hence, we conclude, that in order to treat any disease successfully the Physician must understand its pathology and the medicine which will produce the same identical difficulty.

Tuberculosis is doubtless a curable disease, and perhaps there are medicines known to homoeopathic Physicians, which if prescribed with scientific accuracy according to the principle of "Like cures like," will prove curative in every case, at least, as far as a cure is possible. This disease though of a formidable character like other diseases will yield in all probability to proper treatment. The weight of authority unfortunately is largely

against this opinion, but if the inviolable properties of Affinity and Correspondence were impressed as a condition upon all matters, why not medicines act as efficiently in this, as any other form of disease? Even admit, that there are no remedies with which the Profession are acquainted, that can be relied on with certainty by the most accurate observers, they are somewhere in nature and only require the ordinary industry of a Hahnemannian to discover them.

and define as the principal
Tuberculosis Pulmonalis has been so frequently and minutely described by pathologists, that it is unnecessary to enter upon a further explanation of its pathological character, except so far as necessary to develop its primordial conditions. The disease is owing to the development in the lungs of a peculiar substance, called tubercles. But without pausing to consider their nature

or in what their essential character consists, we shall merely allude to the opinions of pathologists as to the primary seat of tuberculous matter, for the purpose of explaining the reason why we believe the remedies which, though usually employed by homoeopathic Physicians, but not continually, we shall recommend are really homoeopathic to the disease.

The seat of tuberculous matter has been a subject of dispute among pathologists. There are some, who regard the mucous surfaces as the principal seat of tuberculous matter, while others, assert, that tubercles are simply enlarged lymphatic or absorbent glands, but the prevailing opinion however, among pathologists now is, that the seat of tuberculous matter is the cellular tissue of organs. These opinions, however important to the pathologist, if we examine them, clearly point to an important

primary condition, which if carefully borne in mind will render the disease in the hands of a homoeopathic Physician subject to the control of remedial agents, unless complete disorganization has taken place. The want of success heretofore in the treatment of this disease has unfortunately led homoeopathic Physicians, like others, without consideration to believe, that the disease was incurable.

The course of treatment, has been, it is true, unsettled, unsatisfactory, and unsuccessful, but then, no Homoeopath should, because others have failed to prescribe homoeopathic remedies successfully in this disease, hesitate to push his investigations and experiments a little further in order to reduce the practice in this as well as other diseases to a mathematical certainty. Hahnemann has laid it down as a rule, (and this, if understood will lead us to consider pathological conditions,) I quote however, from recollection, "that symptoms are relieved inversely as

they appear." This is true, but in the treatment of tubercular consumption no more fatal error can be committed than to prescribe, though it has been done, for symptoms as they appear during the progress of the disease. Hahnemann, we apprehend did not mean to say, that homoeopathic physicians were to prescribe for the symptoms which were lastly developed, but that the symptoms which occurred last, were less likely to be permanent, from the fact, they were more difficult to excite. ^{e.g.} Nausea and vomiting - vomiting may be relieved, while nausea is not. Remove the cause of disease and the symptoms or its effects will cease in an inverse order from which they appeared.

The view then, which we would here maintain with regard to the opinions of pathologists respecting the seat of tuberculous matter is, that the primary condition, whether the mucous surfaces, lymphatic glands or areolar tissue of organs are involved is, dependent

primarily upon one and the same cause, Capillary engorgement. This condition, however true, is not, we are aware, if regarded as a uniform pathological condition which requires throughout the entire progress of the disease the use of the same remedies, free from objections. It is generally supposed, that remedies which are applicable to the inflammatory, are useless in the suppurative or ulcerative stages. But we think, it will be admitted, that in either of the latter stages of the disease there is at least a sub-acute-inflammatory action going on which requires in alternation with some specific, when we say specific, we mean those medicines which have a specific relation to the cause of the disease, the administration of those remedies which control under ordinary circumstances inflammatory action. It would require a separate treatise to enable us to notice the various theories re-

pecting the exciting and predisposing causes of the disease. especially the predisposing, or even to give a birds-eye-view of the characteristic indications which Authors have laid down more or less empirically, for some forty or more different remedies, which are considered appropriate to the first, second and third stages of the disorder. Therefore, as we have indicated sufficiently, if nothing more: first, the necessity of noting causes and pathological conditions; and secondly, the homoeopathicity of drugs, we must here content ourselves by presenting a brief view of the remedies upon which we should rely principally for the cure of the disease.

Therapeutics. For the treatment of Phthisis various remedies have been recommended, all of which, may be useful at times, though we are inclined to think, that they are seldom

if ever all required in the treatment of the disorder. The principal remedies are however, Aconite and Belladonna. It is upon these two remedies that we must rely in order to overcome Congestion. Congestion may arise from either one of two conditions, either from an excessive flow of blood by the arteries, or from a slow and imperfect return of blood to the heart by the veins. If from the former, Aconite is the remedy for there is no remedy known to homoeopathic Physicians which is capable of controlling the arterial circulation like Aconite, and it must yet play, we think, decidedly a more important part in the treatment ^{of the disease in various} in all stages of the disease than it has done heretofore. But if from the latter, Bell. The action of Bell. unlike Aconite, is specifically upon the venous system, therefore in order to relieve Capillary engorgement it might be necessary to give Aconite and Bell. in alternation. Aconite to reduce the flow of blood to, and Bell. to increase the return of blood from the vessels engorged. Should the disease however, arise from a peptic dyscrasia, Aconite and Bell. may be used simply as intercurrent remedies, either

to prevent or relieve congestions, while other remedies
which are more specific to the disease are emp-
loyed, which with pure air, good diet and mod-
erate exercise, will afford at least, a possibility
of cure.

HOMEOPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGE,

OF PENNSYLVANIA,

for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine

On the ^{11th}

day of January, Eighteen Hundred and

Eighty

By J. J. Howard

of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania